



May 18-24 is Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week

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MADISON – At least 20 Wisconsin counties now harbor emerald ash borer, the exotic insect that has decimated urban trees and forests in the eastern half of the nation.

Although we continue to detect EAB in new locations around the state, humans can help keep it from leapfrogging to whole new areas. They can slow down the spread, to give science time to find more and better controls, and give communities and landowners time to replace ash trees with species that are not susceptible to the pest.

To remind Wisconsinites that they have a role to play in the battle, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has declared May 18-24 Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week. This particular week was chosen nationwide because it includes Memorial Day weekend, the beginning of the summer tourism season, when the risk is high for people to move EAB and other pests to new areas inadvertently on firewood.

Brian Kuhn, director of the Plant Industry Bureau in the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, notes that Wisconsin's forests include more than 765 million ash trees, and that an average of 20 percent of urban street trees in the state are ash. Losing those trees to EAB may impact air and water quality, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and property values, he said.

"Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week is an opportunity for the government to join with schools, businesses, industries, environmental groups, community organizations, tourist and citizens to take action against the spread of the EAB," Kuhn said.

In the past year, EAB has been found in seven new Wisconsin counties. Most of those new finds can likely be attributed to human actions, because they are in areas far from previous known infestations in southeastern and western Wisconsin. Some of them were at campgrounds or boat landings.

This summer, state and federal agencies will set more than 1,500 traps around Wisconsin to monitor for the presence of the EAB.

People can help slow the spread of EAB by:

- Following all quarantine guidelines. For most people, that means not moving firewood out of the quarantine counties.
- Buying firewood near camp sites or buying it from a state-certified firewood vendor. The list of vendors is at <http://datcp.wi.gov/uploads/Plants/pdf/CertifiedFirewoodDealers.pdf>.
- Learning about the signs of EAB infestation. Visit www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov.
- Reporting ash trees that show signs of infestation by calling the EAB hotline toll-free at 1-800-462-2803 or emailing DATCPemeraldashborer@wi.gov.

Since 2008, EAB infestations have been confirmed in Brown, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Douglas, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Kenosha, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Rock, Sauk, Trempealeau, Vernon, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha and Winnebago counties. Those counties are under quarantine. Sheboygan County is also quarantined, because there are infestations close by in neighboring counties. The quarantine means that hardwood cannot be moved out of the counties without an agreement with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

EAB, native to Asia, attacks all species of North American ash trees. Since being discovered near Detroit in 2002, it has spread to 21 states and two Canadian provinces.

Wisconsin's EAB program is a cooperative effort of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA-Forest Service, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and UW-Extension. ###